



Indian Academy of Neurology President's Message

Over the past 8 months, the whole world is facing a turmoil, an unprecedented catastrophe by an invisible enemy-the COVID-19. The deadly attack on mankind has left millions affected and thousands dead and currently there is no place on earth which is safe. In our lifetime probably none of us have witnessed such devastation and detrimental impact on all aspects of mankind, and all our activities have come to a sudden halt.

While we are still ignorant about the exact way how this infection started as well as how it is spreading, and as of now there is no specific cure for the disease, it is evident that the only thing we can do at this moment is prevention. It is being debated about what we could have done to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and about the current policies of lockdown and unlocking of the Society. There are also unhealthy reports of the scientific blackmailing to promote or demote drugs for treatment of COVID-19.

In the last 8 months, we as humans as well as physicians have learnt a lot of lessons and still are totally unaware what the future would be like. Though we are Neurologists, Covid-19 has surpassed all boundaries and now we have two-fold tasks ahead—to serve the community as physicians and to maintain the integrity of our Neurology specialization and our IAN.

We have to keep ourselves abreast of all aspects of COVID19, serve the community as per government regulations and also see how best we can practice neurology. It is not that COVID 19 spares the nervous system and in the coming days we will become more wiser as new epidemiological data surface.

In the present circumstances with uncertain course of the pandemic, absence of guidelines from regulatory authorities on organizing conferences, restricted national and international travel, and most importantly our safety of participants, IAN has been forced to cancel this year's Annual Conference (IANCON-2020) which was scheduled to be held from 5-8 November, 2020 at Bengaluru. This is the first time since inception of IAN in 1991 that we are cancelling an Annual Conference and I am sure that that this decision is painful to all of us. The next IANCON-2021 will be held at the same venue, end of next year.

To continue with IAN's educational activities, IAN has started web based programs every month to constantly update the knowledge of our fraternity as well as engage in active discussions. Though Casualty and Emergency services are accessible to all patients with acute neurological

disorders, the hardship will be most for those with chronic/ sub-acute neurological disorders not prioritized to be seen in Casualty. There will also be issues of drug availability. IAN has already prepared guidelines on how to take care of patients with demyelinating disorders and conducting electro-physiologic evaluation of patients with neurological problems. The other subsections of IAN such as Neurorehabilitation and Movement Disorders are also soon coming up with appropriate guidelines. In the present crisis, telemedicine is emerging as one of the best options both for patients and neurologists, and IAN is taking active measures to formulate guidelines of tele-neurology practice.

COVID pandemic has put our society under an incredible health, emotional and economic burden. We should join hands to serve the Community in whatever way we can—as physicians, neurologists and as good samaritans. We need to interact closely with Ministry of Health and ICMR and provide all expertise and support from our Society.

While in the near future we will continue to mask ourselves and follow social distancing, let us not mask our emotions and distance ourselves from our patients who need us the most at this hour. Finally, please take care of yourself and your family and stay safe.



Dr. Pramod Kumar Pal

President

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